



Ask the Chief of the Anna Police: A weekly column allowing readers access to useful information about law enforcement issues in the Anna area.

Each week I receive requests for information from people in the Anna area. Having received duplicate questions on the same subjects, I thought I would write a weekly column that might help answer some of these questions in the public forum. This column is the personal opinion of Kenny Jenks and is based on his 28 years of policing experience. It is not the official opinion of the City of Anna or the Anna Police Department.

Q: Chief Jenks, I have a problem with my teenager. There are many times each week that my son wants to go out with his friends. My first instincts are not to let him but then I have second thoughts and usually let him go. How do I know if my son is lying or telling the truth about where he is going and what he is doing? Shasta

Q: I have a 17-year-old son that wants to go out at night with his friends. I always tell him that it is not a good idea and I need someone like you to help me with him. Can you reinforce for me what I am trying to do for my child? Twila

Hello Shasta and Twila,

I regularly hear from parents who are having trouble with their teen and of course, I have to talk to parents whose teens have gotten police attention. Many of them deny any wrong-doing by their teen and some even go so far as to blame the police for taking notice of their teen's activities (even when they are illegal). If you are keeping them home, never think that you are doing the wrong thing. The times when teenagers most want their independence is the time that we as parents need to be giving them the most guidance. Hanging around unsupervised with a group of friends will expose them to many choices, both good and bad. Try to keep tabs on where they are and what they are doing.

Keep in mind when making your decision that my years of experience have taught me that anybody is capable of doing anything. Never assume that you know someone well enough to exclude him or her from engaging in questionable or illegal activity, even if that someone is one of your children. Remember, our children are no different than adults when it comes to lying:

- They may lie when faced with consequences (or a variety of other reasons including a need for independence).
- They may lie when they want to do something they know you will not approve of. Teens want to establish an identity that is independent of their parents' knowledge and authority. Withholding details about their lives is a way for them to gain this.
- Teens also lie to protect themselves from parental reaction, teacher reaction, and any authority figure's reaction. Think back when we were teens. Did you tell your parents about everything you did? When they asked you, did you ever lie to them about minor stuff just to avoid the conflict?

You are not alone with these "what do I do" parental feelings. I have four children: one college grad, two in college and one still at home. I always wanted to trust them and when I did, most of the time they did not disappoint. But some times, they did disappoint me to the point that I had to discipline them.

Remember, the more you limit someone's bad choices, the less they are to make them. Keeping your teens home is like practicing abstinence: It works every time it is tried! Please do not make this assumption (I have heard from a lot from parents), "We moved to a small town and we didn't think we needed to watch our kids as much." If a child escapes trouble when a parent believes this myth, it is blind luck.

***Phone numbers: Emergency???? Dial 911.** To have a police officer sent to you in a non-emergency, call 972-547-5350. During normal business hours, the APD number is 972-924-2848.

*For Crime Prevention information visit www.annacrimewatch.org or www.annatexas.gov and go to the police pages.

If you have a question or comment, please email: kjenks@annatexas.gov